

Appl. No. 09/786,213  
Amdt. Dated  
Reply to Office Action of June 17, 2004

Attorney Docket No. 81833.0027  
Customer No.: 26021

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 13-17, 19, and 20 are canceled without prejudice. Claim 18 is amended. Claim 18 is pending in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagano et al. (U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0016120 A1). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Claim 18, as amended, is as follows:

A non-woven fabric structure constituted by bonding plural fiber lumps each shaped with a minor axis of 2 to 100 mm comprising short fibers in which the fiber lumps comprise at least two kinds of fibers, one of constituent fibers contains an ingredient having a melting point lower than that of other fibers, the fiber lumps are substantially bonded at portions of contact between each of the fibers with the low melting ingredient and the short fibers constituting the fiber lump are arranged along random directions in at least two surfaces of the fiber lump.

Nagano only describes fiber lumps that are less than 1 mm in an axis should not be made in itself. In contrast, the present invention teaches a non-woven fabric that is pulverized by using a square pelletizer or rotary type universal pulverizer to obtain fiber lumps of a desired size and by making the fiber lump into a desired shape a non-woven fabric structure has a structure formed in equal density.

Nagano only describes that the thermal adhesive non-woven fabric having a three dimensional network structure can be formed (Nagano, page 2, paragraph 0025). In contrast, the present invention teaches that the three dimensional randomness means that the directionality (orientation) of the individual fibers

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constituting the non-woven fabric is not aligned in a predetermined direction (Applicant's specification, at p. 15, lines 1-6).

In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that Nagano could not have made claim 18 obvious, because Nagano fails to teach or suggest each and every claim limitation. Withdrawal of this rejection is thus respectfully requested.

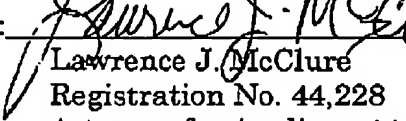
In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, in view of the foregoing remarks, are requested.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California telephone number (213) 337-6810 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,  
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

Date: September 16, 2004

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